

# Heritage Lessons



*Bringing you the People and Places of Heritage Education -- Louisiana*

## Vanishing History

*Kathie Istre, Dolby Elementary*

At first, Kathy Istre's Heritage Education -- Louisiana project seems to contradict itself. Entitled "Vanishing History," the 2002 mini grant project seeks to prevent just that-- instead preserving local history in the minds and hearts of her students.

Approximately eighty fourth and fifth grade students from Calcasieu Parish's gifted program, SPARK will benefit from the research of this grant. These students come from 22 different schools, both private and public. They attend Dolby Elementary, a Gifted Enrichment Resource Center, for five hours once a week.

"Here today...gone tomorrow. Who is to say what will happen to Louisiana's most prized historical sites?" Istre said. "My goal is to provide Louisiana children with a sense of appreciation, pride, and stewardship for Louisiana's historical buildings."

Each year, the Louisiana Preservation Alliance publishes a list of the ten Most Endangered Historical Sites in Louisiana. This list draws attention to historically or architecturally important properties that are threatened by demolition, neglect, or unsympathetic development. The students will study these lists from the past four years and



Kathy Istre's 'Vanishing History' Project allowed her students to produce a photo documentary of endangered Louisiana sites. The photos have been on display at McNeese State University.



**Read an extended version of this story on our new website: [www.heritage-ed.org](http://www.heritage-ed.org)**

choose four sites to visit, research and photograph.

Throughout the year, the photographs and historical information will be on exhibit for the school and community to see. Students will also create multimedia-presentations which will be posted onto the school website. The project began in October 2002 and ended in April 2003.

One of Istre's students said "I learned that you should appreciate old things because one day you may think that it's not important when you could have learned about it and now it is gone. I could have prevented it from being knocked down."

Kathie Istre said, "The grant was written to look at

four endangered sites. As we began the project, we began to look in our own area and we found a man who partnered up with us who knew a lot of the history of these sites."

Kathie's dad, a photographer, also partnered with the class.

The Heritage Education -- Louisiana grant funded digital cameras used for the photo documentation. According to Istre, the cameras were only the catalyst for a greater learning opportunity.

"The project was not really about the photography but about the history of the buildings," Istre said. "The photography was the hook that brought them into the project, but the project was really about getting people to learn about the sites history and learn about people and stewardship."

## Spring: A Time for New Beginnings

By Sheila Richmond

What a lot of ideas we've planted with this issue!

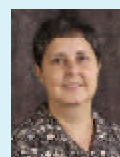
- Kathy Istre and her students provided 500 images for a display at the Frazar Memorial Library at McNeese State University in Lake Charles. Newspaper and television coverage brought in many visitors and high praise from the community about the project.

- Pat Duncan's article on the newly remodeled Louisiana Studies in Historic Preservation website is a *must* for anyone interested in historic structures. The website provides information about architecture in Louisiana, lesson plans, images, and a host of other resources.

- The Center for Understanding the Built Environment (CUBE) offers much for teachers to interest students in their communities such as *Walk Around the Block*, *Community Connections*, and *Box City*.

- Heritage Education -- Louisiana and Northwestern State University workshops will offer hands-on experience in looking at your downtown with new eyes and a new viewpoint.

Let us know your ideas!



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# Historic Preservation for Teachers and Students

By Patricia L. Duncan

Why should we protect and preserve old buildings? The answer is simple: because they influence us in many positive ways. Each community has its own story to tell — a story which is illustrated by its historic buildings.

Aged buildings also impart a sense of identity and place, which makes one community different from every other. Older buildings often possess a degree of artistic value and architectural richness which is no longer obtainable. Can one imagine New Orleans without the French Quarter or the Garden District?

No one argues that every aged structure should be saved, but certainly the importance of each building to its community should be evaluated before that resource is forever lost. It is important to educate the public — and especially the children who will become the decision makers of tomorrow — about the importance of historic resources.

For those teachers who want to instill in their students an appreciation of the rich resources within their communities and around the state, the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation provides an exciting online resource: *Louisiana Studies in Historic Preservation* ([www.laheritage.org](http://www.laheritage.org)). The site examines the types of historic buildings found in the state and how these buildings reflect Louisiana's history and culture.



The Louisiana Studies in Historic Preservation website features numerous examples of architecture found in Louisiana. Pictured is a "dog-trot" home commonly built by pioneers settling in Louisiana.

## Ten Units

Of the ten units projected, Creole Heritage, Plantation Life, Pioneer Settlement and Age of Mechanization are complete. Downtown Louisiana, the Acadians, and Victorian Era will soon be ready. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century, African American Life and Caring for Our Heritage will be available for Fall 2004.

## Five Components

The **Public Page** explains the unit's major themes and provides links to areas outside and inside the site.

The **Background** features a narrative and a series of "Fun Facts" chosen to stimulate student interest.

The printable **EZ Content Blueprint** provides pertinent information in outline form and links to color images illustrating important points. Many of these images are labeled and can be printed for classrooms.

The **Lesson Plan** follows the *Making Connections* lesson plan template from the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE). A downloadable PowerPoint presentation focusing upon major themes and a bibliography are part of this section.

**Activities** provides a broad range of learning experiences for students.

## Features

The **Educator** area provides a chart relating the ten units to the DOE's Social Studies Standards and a content outline showing how each unit fits into the Louisiana Studies curriculum.

Other areas include **illustrated glossary**, an **image area** containing color and black and white graphics, a list of **online resources** related to content, a link to the Division's National Register of Historic Places web site, and an e-mail link to contact the Division's education coordinator.

Even though this site is closely connected to middle school Social Studies curriculum standards, many teachers have used the information to create lessons in other content areas such as English Language Arts and Art.

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## Weblinks

<http://www.louisianapurchase2003.com/>

The Louisiana Purchase, approved by treaty in April of 1803, is called the most significant real estate transaction in the history of civilization. This comprehensive site contains historical information on the Louisiana Purchase and a listing of events commemorating the 200th anniversary of this event.

<http://www.cubekc.org>

The Center for Understanding the Built Environment (CUBE) brings together educators with community partners to effect change which will lead to a quality built and natural environment, one and interdependent. This means cities which work for adults and children; buildings and spaces which are healthy and aesthetically pleasing; streetscapes and landscapes which reach to the future while celebrating the past. The ultimate goal of CUBE is not simply to enable children to learn to value the built environment, nor is it just to improve their problem-solving and social skills.

## Heritage Education Workshops Scheduled

In partnership with Northwestern State University of Louisiana, *Heritage Education—Louisiana* will offer workshops designed to aid teachers in developing innovative methods for teaching heritage education in the classroom. The theme for summer 2003 is "Downtown!"

Teachers will learn how to use local cultural resources to create lessons and activities that meet curriculum needs for Math, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. The two-day workshop will provide hands-on activities, field trips, information packets, online and printed resources, and supplies.

Three dates and locations are available: Natchitoches on June 20-21, Hammond on July 11-12, or Crowley on July 25-26.

The deadlines for each session are one week prior to the start date. Please indicate first and second choice when applying. Space is limited.

A flyer about the workshop can be downloaded from Heritage Education -- Louisiana's new website: [www.heritage-ed.com](http://www.heritage-ed.com). For more information, contact Kim Bowen, Heritage Education Assistant, at [kimb Bowen@contractor.nps.gov](mailto:kimb Bowen@contractor.nps.gov) or (318) 356-7444.



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